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SIPDIS

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MEXICO FOR DHS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CASC](#) [CMGT](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: Adoption Visas Processed in Guatemala City  
Reach New High

1. Guatemala City's Immigrant Visa Unit issued 3,783 immigrant visas to adopted Guatemalan orphans in FY 2005. This is a new record for Guatemala City, and is a 15.9 percent increase in orphan visa workload over FY 2004. It also represents nearly 53 percent of our total IV workload for the year. The increase in adoption cases is testament to the easy availability of infants relinquished by their birth mothers, the relatively short amount of time that it takes to complete a Guatemalan adoption, and the relative reliability of the process.

2. The following table illustrates the growth in orphan visas in Guatemala since FY 2001. The IV unit has managed the most recent increases with one officer and four locally engaged staff as the mainstays of our immigrant visa unit, at a time when continued growth in the number of orphan visa cases coincides with an increase in the volume of other IV cases due to USCIS approval of an unusually large number of petitions in FY 2005. To help manage the increased IV workload, the IV unit implemented a new appointment system for adoption immigrant visa interviews in October 2005. Prior to that, adopting families could come in without an appointment for their immigrant visa interview. Rather than seeing up to 70 families on Mondays, the appointment system distributes adoption cases evenly across the week without creating a backlog.

YEAR	Visas Issued	Percentage of Change
FY 2001	1609	5.9
FY 2002	2419	50.3
FY 2003	2326	-3.85
FY 2004	3262	40.2
FY 2005	3783	15.9

Note that the number of orphan visas issued in FY 2003 was suppressed reduced by Guatemala's failed March 2003 attempt to implement the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, which slowed the processing of adoption cases by Guatemalan authorities and may have caused some prospective adopting parents to adopt elsewhere because of the uncertainty. A second attempt to implement an adoption process consistent with Hague requirements is currently under consideration by the Guatemalan Congress. Attempts by adoption agencies and parents to complete action prior to its possible approval also appear to be one factor pushing high numbers of adoption cases through the system.

DERHAM